AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

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Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Water soluble salt cores manufactured by compacting a mixture of water soluble salts and binder under pressure and by subsequently subjecting said compacted mixture to a thermal treatment,

wherein the binder is an inorganic phosphate or a mixture of inorganic phosphates, the binder comprising ~~being a fraction of~~ between 0.5 and 10 by wt. % of said mixture of water soluble salts and the binder, the mixture of water-soluble salts and the binder further comprising between approximately 1 and 10% by weight of a parting agent comprising graphite,

wherein the mixture of the water soluble salts and the binder ~~are~~ is compacted and subsequently sintered at approximately 200 degrees C, and

wherein the compacted and sintered mixture is not subjected to outgassing ~~under~~ at a temperature [[of]] below 700 degrees C during a heating process in the subsequent thermal treatment.

2. (Currently Amended) The water soluble salt cores as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that the binder ~~contains a fraction of~~ comprises an inorganic borate.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The water soluble salt cores as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that the inorganic phosphate is a monoaluminium phosphate.

5. (Previously Presented) The water soluble salt cores as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that the inorganic phosphate is a boron phosphate.

6. (Previously Presented) The water soluble salt cores as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that the inorganic phosphate is a sodium polyphosphate

7. (Previously Presented) The water soluble salt cores as set forth in claim 1, characterized in that thermal treatment occurs at temperatures of less than 730 ° C.

8. (Currently Amended - Withdrawn) A method for producing a water soluble salt core for castings, the method comprising:

providing water soluble salts;

mixing the water soluble salts with a binder and a parting agent to create a mixture, the binder being an inorganic phosphate or a mixture of inorganic phosphates, the binder comprising at least one of a monoaluminium phosphate, a boron phosphate, or a sodium polyphospate, wherein the binder ~~has a weight of~~ comprises between approximately 0.5 and 10% of a total weight of the mixture, wherein the parting agent ~~has a weight~~ comprises between approximately 1 and 10% of the total weight of the mixture, and wherein the parting agent comprises graphite;

compacting the mixture; and

sintering the mixture at approximately 200 degrees Celsius, wherein the mixture is not subjected to outgassing at a temperature below 700 degrees Celsius during a heating process in a subsequent thermal treatment.